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Cuba Says CIA Tried Os

Havana

Cuban officials said yesterday that the CIA has waged a campaign to blame Cuba for the assassination of President John Kennedy to justify strong action against the island.

The remarks came during a public hearing that forms part of the World Youth Festival being celebrated here. Witnesses presented evidence aimed at showing that Cuba was not involved in the assassination.

A former Cuban consul in Mexico, Eusebio Lopez, said someone impersonating Lee Harvey Oswald applied for a visa to visit the island two months before Oswald was arrested for killing President John Kennedy.

The man who posed as Oswald during several visits to the embassy had a fatter, older face than the man arrested for killing the President, he said.

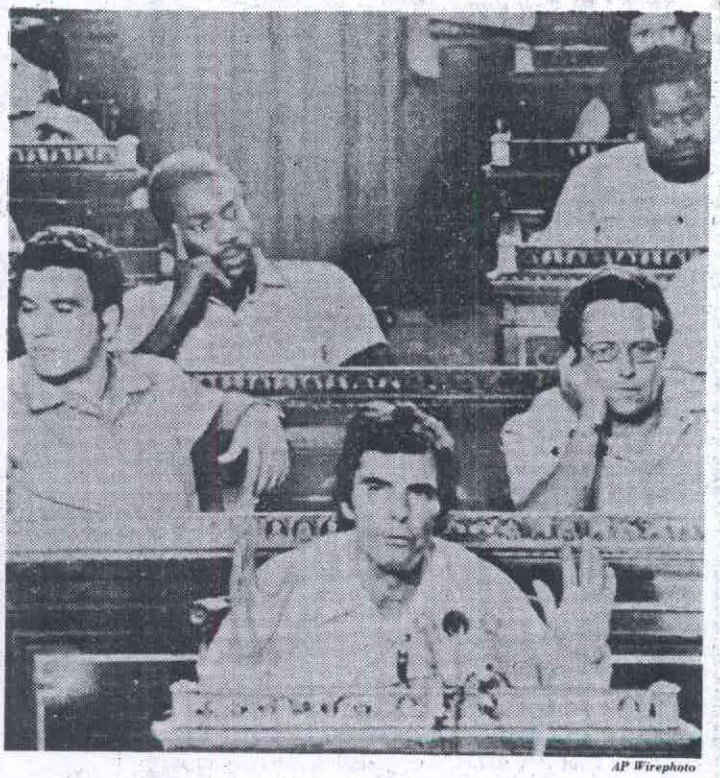
Cuban officials said the impersonation was designed to give the false impression that Oswald had Cuban connections. The CIA had bugged the Cuban consulate in Mexico and would have had conclusive proof of any plot between Oswald and Cuba, they added.

They charged that the CIA, Cuban counter-revolutionaries and the Mafia were linked to the Kennedy assassination.

A Cuban double agent who said he had worked in Miami and infiltrated both counter-revolutionary groups and the CIA charged that these organizations received the news of Kennedy's killing exultantly.

A few days later a CIA official told him that attacks on Cuba would increase because the limits on operations had been removed, he testified.

Another key witness was Rolando Cubela, whom the CIA sent on a mission to kill Cuban President Fidel Castro in 1966. The CIA later suggested that Cubela might have been a double agent who informed the Cubans of another plot to kill Castro in 1963 and that Cuba might



AP Wirephoto

Former CIA agent Philip Agee told the "tribunal" in Havana the CIA blew up a ship, killing 100 Cubans

wald Frame-Up

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have reacted by making a revenge attack on President Kennedy.

Cubela told the hearing that he had served 12 years of a 25-year sentence for counter-revolutionary activities and added he was not a double agent.

Thin-faced, balding, with closely-cropped grey hair, Cubela said the CIA had lied and that he was indignant that the Kennedy assassination was being used in this way.

The hearing was held before a tribunal investigating "crimes of imperialism."

Cuba also produced a wide range of evidence of other CIA plots to kill Castro, including an alleged attempt in Chile in 1971, much of which had been published before.

New, however, were videotaped interviews with a number of prisoners who were captured during these attempts.

One was Leopoldina Grau, a niece of former Cuban president Grau San Martin, who was sentenced to 30 years for trying to poison Castro. She dispassionately gave details of the plot.

One of the Cuban speakers, Jose Fernandez Santos, said one attempt on Castro's life was to have taken place in Mexico in 1976, a year after the U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee issued a report on Central Intelligence Agency assassination plots against Castro and other foreign leaders.

That report prompted President Ford to issue an executive order on February 17, 1976 prohibiting U.S. employees from engaging in or conspiring to engage in assassinations.

Castro's visit to Mexico was scheduled for the "first few weeks of 1976" but was canceled for undisclosed reasons.

An American speaker before the invitation-only audience Tuesday, ex-CIA man Philip Agee, claimed the U.S. agency was responsible for the death of 100 Cubans in 1960 in the explosion of a ship carrying weapons Cuba had purchased from Belgium. But he gave no details.

Agee, who quit the CIA in 1969 after 12 years and has written or co-authored two books critical of it, told of the agency's alleged activities in the early 1960s to persuade Latin American governments to follow the U.S. lead and break diplomatic relations with Cuba.

He said the CIA fabricated a document purporting to contain names of Peruvians on the payroll of the Cuban Embassy in Lima, and after it appeared in a Lima newspaper, the Peruvian government broke relations with Havana.

He said the CIA produced false documents alleging misbehavior in Uruguay by 11 Communist diplomats from Europe and Asia; the resulting outcry led to their ouster from Montevideo, and soon after Uruguay broke relations with Cuba.

Another speaker identifying herself as a former CIA employee, Elsie Wilcott, said she was a secretary in the agency's Miami office in the mid-1960s. She said so many anti-Castro saboteurs were on the payroll that the office on occasion had to make out 250 checks at a time.

Wilcott said large sums of money were used to recruit personnel for counter-revolutionary activity against the Castro government, and prostitutes were used to blackmail prospective recruits into joining.

Reuters & AP